



## ETHNIC COMMISSION FOR PEACE AND THE DEFENCE OF TERRITORIAL RIGHTS

Bogota, D.C., March 30, 2020.

**Mr.**  
**IVÁN DUQUE**  
President of the Republic of Colombia  
The City,

**CC: Mrs. Alicia Arango Olmos**  
Colombia's Minister of the Interior

**CC: Mr. Fernando Carrillo**  
Attorney General of the Nation

**CC: Mr. Carlos Alfonso Negret**  
Colombia's Ombudsman

**CC: Mr. Alberto Brunori**  
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia – UN

**CC: Mrs. Luz Adriana Hinestrosa Arias**  
Peace Commission, Congress of the Republic of Colombia

**Ref. Rights of Ethnic Peoples in the Context of the Current Pandemic / Application for assistance from Cuba.**

Cordial Greetings,

Within the framework of the Ethnic Commission for Peace and Defence of Territorial Rights, members of the IANPE's High Instance of Indigenous Peoples, we address you, on behalf of the organizations and communities that are part of the peace process and work on protecting ethnic territorial rights, in reference to the rights of Indigenous, Black, Afro, Raizal and Palenquero Peoples, in the context of the current global pandemic and the impacts it is having and will have on our communities, territories and rights.

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The Ethnic Commission for Peace and the Defense of Territorial Rights (*La Comisión Étnica para la Paz y la Defensa de los Derechos Territoriales*), made up of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (*Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia, ONIC*), Traditional Indigenous Authorities of Colombia (*Autoridades Tradicionales Indígenas de Colombia*), Indigenous Authorities of the Southwest (*Autoridades Indígenas del Suroccidente, AISO*), National Council of Afro-Colombian Peace (*Consejo Nacional de Paz Afrocolombiano, CONPA*), National African-Colombian Authority (*Autoridad Nacional Afrocolombiana, ANAFRO*), Association of Community Councils of Northern Cauca (*Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Norte del Cauca, ACONC*), National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians (*Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados, AFRODES*), National Conference of Afro-Colombians (*Conferencia Nacional Afrocolombiana, CNOA*) Afro-Colombian Labor Council (*Consejo Laboral Afrocolombiano, CLAF*), Choco's Interethnic Solidarity Forum (*Foro Interétnico Solidaridad Choco, FISCH*), Kambiri National Women's Network (*Red Nacional de Mujeres Kambiri*), Afro-Colombian Pastoral Center – Quibdó (*Centro de Pastoral Afrocolombiana*), Process of Black Communities in Colombia (*Proceso de Comunidades Negras en Colombia, PCN*)



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The purpose of this letter is to ask you to urgently take all possible and timely measures to avoid further impacts on our populations.

In relation to immediate measures:

- To permanently coordinate with our ethnic-territorial authorities for the establishment of appropriate measures to respond to the pandemic crisis, through health emergency committees, for operational coordination and decision-making in managing this situation in our urban and rural communities.
- Provide training to our ethnicities' medical personnel, knowers and medical authorities, health care networks, and knowers by qualified medical personnel for control and management of the Pandemic.
- To allocate additional and complementary resources for our homes and health centers and to install field hospitals strategically located in the territories assigned by our authorities, and to make available helicopters for transfers to intensive care centers.
- To coordinate with ethnic authorities for the use of the appropriate communal infrastructures and if required, also with external structures such as hotels and recreation centers to be used as outpatient care spaces for testing and primary attention of vulnerable or mild emergencies cases.
- To allocate air, ground, and water ambulances with their respective specialized medical equipment and personnel for both sampling and hospital care.
- To create local health emergency committees and chains for the supply and distribution of basic supplies and food for and with ethnic peoples, monitoring prices in this last case.
- To provide a radio communication network responsive to the communication problems in areas that are isolated and do not have ordinary means of communication such as telephones and internet.
- To establish a strategy with a specific budget under the direct administration of the ethnic authorities and if this is not possible, through the territorial authorities with the

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supervision of the ethnic authorities in order to ensure the basic minimum by for example subsidizing rent and public services.

- To ensure local medical monitoring brigades especially for pregnant women, children and elder people. In addition, to facilitate the appropriate requirements requested by *pateras* and knowers for better care according to the cultural values in the territories.
- To allocate a specific quota of necessary medicine, instruments, and biosecurity and protective supplies (such as high-efficiency face masks, suitable waterproof uniforms, goggles, gloves and glycerinated alcohol, etc.), and supplies for application of the virus contamination test.
- The emergency, in the context of this crisis, must be addressed in accordance with the specific plans drawn up by the authorities and/or organizations of the ethnic territories ensuring solid material measures.

The current juncture should serve us a country for the creation of an Ethnic Community Epidemiological Surveillance System which does not violate neither the right to traditional ethnic medicine, nor its own health structures or procedures, and which promotes prevention, containment and mitigation not only of the Pandemic, but which represents an opportunity to better conduct decision-making in the management of an appropriate health care model by territorial authorities such as community councils and Indigenous reservations.

Given that the country is not prepared to fully address this crisis and our territories and communities much less, we ask you in a special way as a representative of the Colombian government to immediately initiate direct dialogues and make relevant arrangements with the Government of Cuba, in the context of the request for humanitarian aid and cooperation, in the following areas:

- A medical mission to specifically address the needs of the ethnic population in this crisis and to take all of the administrative and other measures necessary to ensure that this mission is implemented.
- The donation of interferon 2 sublingual handling ampoules.

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- Manual ventilators, rapid diagnostic tests and other means of response that are more appropriate to our contexts.

The previous proposals are based on the current and historical reality of our peoples that, for the effects of the brevity and gravity of the situation, we would like to summarize in the following aspects:

The current pandemic adds to the humanitarian crisis we face from a long time ago, the state abandonment, the structural racism, and the state's failure to protect our rights, comply with constitutional court orders, or measures such as the decrees law of ethnic victims or the Ethnic Chapter of the Final Peace Agreement itself. Many of our peoples are endangered, their cultural and physical survival is under threat, in urban contexts of displacement or economic migration, who live mostly from day to day.

Finally, as ethnic peoples in Colombia, in the face of this public, economic, social and environmental health emergency produced after the global pandemic, we send a message of solidarity to the Colombian people, we recognize the enormous collective efforts of the families, neighborhoods and communities undertaken as one people to mitigate this catastrophe we face. It is time for the national government to make decisions in accordance with the will and requirements of the ethnic peoples and in general of the Colombian people.

We call on every Colombian, the sister peoples of Latin America, the Abya Yala and other parts of the world to unite all efforts and in one same feeling, together, get out of this challenge for the life, we can do it.

**#FuerzaEtnica**

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